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ABSTRACT

A practicum aimed to improve the basic literacy skills of juvenile delinquents in a county jail by using relevant experiences as the basis of learning. Two corollary aims were to increase the number of high school diplomas generated through the General Educational Development (GED) test, and prepare students to function in the outside world. Students shared relevant experiences with other students. From this discussion a vocabulary list was generated that was used for reading and spelling. Students then wrote out on paper what they had shared with the group and submitted it for review and correction. Students then revised the work before typing it on the computer. Students shared the completed writing with the teacher and fellow classmates. Students produced poetry, personal stories, letters to the judge, and GED essays. Outcomes of the practicum were positive. Although the correctional facility posed unique problems, objectives were met. Students produced original papers based on relevant experiences; six of the seven students passed the GED; and the data showed improvement in basic literacy skills. In addition, the practicum demonstrated that: (1) students in correctional facilities can take responsibility for their own learning; (2) literacy is based in culture and related through relevant experience; (3) technology is a motivating factor in student learning; and (4) peer tutoring is beneficial for tutors, tutees, and teachers. (Three tables of data are included; 34 references, 4 tables of test score data, survey instruments, and samples of student writing are attached.) (Author/RS)

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Improving Basic Literacy Skills Of Juvenile Delinquents Through Relevant Experiences

by

Louis A. Manzella

Cluster 37

A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1991

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Louis A. Manzella under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

August 13, 1991
Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D., Advisor

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Abstract

Improving Basic Literacy Skills of Juvenile Delinquents Through Relevant Experiences. Manzella, Louis A., 1991: Practicum I Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Juvenile Delinquency/Literacy/Functional Illiteracy/Learning Disability/Adolescent Education.

This practicum aimed to improve the basic literacy skills of juvenile delinquents in the county jail by using relevant experiences as the basis of learning. Two corollary aims were to increase the number of high school diplomas generated through the General Education Development Test (GED), and prepare students to function in the outside world.

Students shared relevant experiences with other students. From this discussion a vocabulary list was generated that was used for reading and spelling. Students then wrote out on paper what they had shared with the group and submitted it to the writer for review and correction. Students then revised the work before typing it on the computer. Students shared the completed writing with the teacher and fellow classmates. Students produced poetry, personal stories, letters to the judge, and GED essays.

Outcomes of the practicum were positive. Although the correctional facility posed unique problems, objectives were met. Students produced original papers based on relevant experiences; six of seven students passed the GED; and the data showed improvement in basic literacy skills. In addition, the practicum demonstrated that: (a) students in correctional facilities can take responsibility for their own learning, (b) literacy is based in culture and related through relevant experience, (c) technology is a motivating factor in student learning, and (d) peer tutoring is beneficial for tutors, tutees, and teachers.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The writer's work setting is an 1,800 inmate maximum security county jail facility. The county it serves is a densely populated metropolitan area containing two major cities and numerous smaller cities and towns. The jail itself is divided into maximum, medium, and minimum security areas, with separate facilities for male and female inmates. Juvenile offenders are retained in the maximum security complex and by law are separated from adult offenders.The county criminal court building, juvenile detention center, the governing HRS office, and juvenile court are located on or about the jail grounds.

Approximately 70 juvenile males are housed in the maximum security area of the county jail. Ranging in age from 14 to 17 years old, these youths have been remanded to the maximum security facility for the number of charges against them or the seriousness of

these charges. The majority of these youth have served time in the juvenile detention center previous to their transfer to the jail.

The juveniles are housed in their own wing of the prison complex. By state law, each must be afforded his own cell. The cells are arranged in five separate enclosed areas, or pods consisting of 16 cells. Eight cells are on the lower level and six are on the upper level. The pod is walled in with windows for viewing in and out, and one gate for exit onto the wing. The juveniles are let out of their cells into this pod area several times per day to socialize, play cards, and watch television.

At the jail the juveniles eat their meals alone in their cells, as do the adults. Breakfast is served at 4:30 a.m., lunch at 10:30 a.m., and dinner at 4:30 p.m. They may be let outside into a small walled in area for recreation two times a day for a period of approximately thirty minutes. Except for attending class, or visitation from attorneys, family, and friends, the juveniles are locked up the majority of the time. One pod is reserved for juveniles who have fought with other juveniles, or with corrections officers. They are "locked down" continuously. These

juveniles are restricted in their activities and because of their behavior cannot attend classes. After a time, they are released to their original pod.

By state law, juveniles aged 15 and under must be provided an education. There were six juveniles 15 years of age at the jail at the start of the practicum. The names of any juveniles under 16 years of age must be placed on a weekly list of students attending class. The remainder of the class was made up of eleven juveniles 16 and 17 years of age who voluntarily attend classes. The remaining juveniles at the jail, numbering approximately 54, had no interest in attending class.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

Classes at the jail are divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The morning session runs from 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The afternoon session runs from noon to 2:30 p.m. Students are thus afforded 300 minutes of education on a daily basis. Classes are held in a small room in an adult wing of the maximum security facility directly across from the control station for that wing. Corrections officers are always present in the control room and outside of the classroom for security reasons. The room is carpeted and the ceiling tiled. Walls are sparsely decorated with posters and placards, and on

the "Wall of Fame" hangs copies of the 17 GEDs that have been awarded to students through this program since it began almost two years ago.

The room contains three Apple computers, 16 desks, tables and chairs, cabinets and files, and numerous textbooks in all subject areas at various grade levels. GED materials are plentiful as are other non-subject matter related materials. Computer programs and educational computer games abound. The cabinet contains, among other things, a tape player and headsets so that students may listen to relaxing music while they work.

The room can hold no more than sixteen students comfortably, and is better suited to a smaller group. As the room is nearly triangular in shape, the tables are arranged against the side walls, with the chalkboard and teacher's desk on the back wall. This set up allows flexibility for students to work together and also establishes focus to the center of the room.

Teaching the juveniles at the jail is a shared responsibility. The senior teacher, who initiated the juvenile program at the jail, has been teaching at the juvenile detention center for over ten years. In early 1988, he was asked by the director of Dropout

Prevention to set up a program for the juveniles who were being sent to the jail facility for the first time, as no educational program was in place there. The program started as a half day session, with the senior teacher returning to the detention center to teach special classes in the afternoon.

This school year, the program was expanded to a full day session. A second teacher was needed to teach at the detention center in the morning and the jail in the afternoon. Sharing the jail responsibilities would allow teachers to preview students at the detention center before they came to the jail, and would negate the possibility of a single teacher being isolated at the jail with no outside contact. The writer was fortunate enough to be selected for the position.

Subject areas covered at the jail include social studies and math in the morning, and science and English in the afternoon. Students who need credits in different subject areas are afforded the opportunity to gain credits in those areas. The writer, teaching at the jail in the afternoon, is responsible for the science and English subject areas. The main thrust of the program is to improve basic skills, secure credits for those students who plan to return to school, and

prepare those students who are interested for the General Educational Development test (GED).

In general terms, the student population at the jail is two or more years behind grade level in reading and language skills, as indicated by standardized tests. Many of these students have dropped out of school, or have not attended school regularly. Students are primarily black, from lower income inner city sections of the community, and have had a recurrent pattern of delinquent or criminal behavior. The program is designed to meet the individual needs of the student, and to attempt to give the individual an opportunity to become a productive member of society.

The writer has taught in the county school system for three years. The first two years were spent in an alternative education drop-out prevention program. The new school year brought on the change from an environment that attempted to be safe and nurturing, to one where the number one priority is security.

Previous to teaching in the county, the writer taught elementary and middle school for five years in a northern industrial city after graduation from college with a bachelor of arts degree in history and a master's degree in education. The writer also worked

for a major airline in the northeast in a managerial capacity for almost five years, and had started up a business partnership in the personnel field that lasted one year before the company was purchased by a contract engineering firm.

The decision to return to the field of education after being out of the classroom for nearly eight years was one that has not been regretted. Reentering the classroom with a myriad of "real world" experience has lent itself positively to the real world of education. All the lessons learned in business and management are being applied to the work with students, teachers, and administrators. The culmination of all of this is the drive to attain a lifelong goal, a doctorate in education.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The situation that needed improvement in the writer's work setting is the poor basic literacy skills of the juveniles. The students in the juvenile class at the jail did not possess the literacy skills necessary to function productively in society. Students were reading at least two years below grade level; they found it most difficult to read grade level materials. Materials related to the GED, including Science and Social Studies subject area materials, were above the level of understanding of the majority of the students. Word recognition and reading comprehension were problem areas as were spelling and writing.

Students on the lower levels found reading to be difficult. Their lack of success in this area affected their work, their outlook on schooling, the possibilities of attaining a GED, and further education

after jail. Without success, these students were not motivated to continue the education process. The lack of basic skills would prohibit them from getting a legitimate job thus contributing to the cycle of crime and illegal activity that got them into jail in the first place. Members of society as well as the community as a whole are negatively affected by the crime and criminal activity.

The problem that existed among the juveniles at the county jail was functional illiteracy in the student population.

Problem Documentation

Actual evidence that the problem existed could be observed in the everyday activity of the classroom. Oral reading activities showed that 9 of 16 students had extreme difficulty with word recognition, fluidity, and pronunciation. Five of the 16 were able to read well orally based on the above criteria, but only two could read orally with expression. Poor writing skills were evident in 11 of the 16 students. Many students had difficulty in expressing an opinion or concept. Such items as grammar, spelling and punctuation were almost non-existent. The remaining five students

exhibited writing skills that would be considered grade level work.

Low GED pre-test scores were an indicator of poor basic literacy skills among the juveniles. The five separate tests on the GED include Writing Skills Part I and Part II, Social Studies, Science, Interpreting Literature and the Arts, and Mathematics. Students in this state must pass each test with a score of 40 or better, and receive a minimum of 225 points overall. Only three of 16 students were able to score at least 40 points on the GED practice test (referred to as the pre-test). An indication that a student is ready to pass the GED is scores well above 40 on each test, and an overall score well above 225 points. Seven students scored below minimum, and six students were not able to try the test as their reading levels made attempting the test prohibitive (see Appendix A for scores).

Reading comprehension skills, as indicated by scores on the subject area GED pre-tests and in class measurements, were very poor in at least eight of the 16 students. These students are not able to tell about what they have just read. They are thus incapable of understanding and answering questions about subject area materials.

An informal attitude survey taken among the 16 juveniles in class indicated that 14 had no plans to continue their education when released. Only two students indicated that they wished to continue. One wished to attend junior college, and the second indicated a preference for a trade school.

Table 1

Indicators of Low Basic Literacy Skills

16 student inmates in class	
Low pre-GED test scores	13
Poor oral reading skills	9
Poor writing skills	11
Poor reading comprehension skills	8
Negative attitude toward education after jail	14

Causative Analysis

The causes of the poor basic literacy skills of the juvenile delinquents at the jail were related to a number of factors. The cause of the problem that appeared most obvious is the fact that these students had not attended school regularly. The six juveniles in class 15 years of age, who by law must attend school, had an absentee rate that was extremely high. Each had

at least 20 absences per semester when they were enrolled in school. By county school board policy, ten absences in a given semester can constitute automatic failure. Of the remaining 11 juveniles, seven "officially" dropped out of school at the age of 16.

Another cause of the poor basic literacy skills of the juveniles was the quality of education they received in the schools they attended. The class is made up primarily of minority students from low socio-economic backgrounds and inner city neighborhoods. The quality of education in the schools in these areas was inferior to the education they may have received if they attended school in a middle class neighborhood. Lack of adequate resources, funding, and staffing were problems which plague the schools in these older, run down sections of the community. The ability of these schools to meet the needs of their student population was severely hampered. Students with special needs or learning disabilities were not given the help and attention they needed to be successful.

These students had no motivation to attend class. They saw that school had no relevancy in their daily lives and for these reasons gave up on school. Because they did not care about their education, they exhibited

behaviors which got them into trouble with school officials and ultimately with the law. A cycle of failure and punishment which rendered schooling useless, and crime attractive and rewarding, was initiated.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature revealed that poor basic literacy skills are related to juvenile delinquency, learning disability, school failure, low socio-economic status, behavioral problems, and cultural identity.

Juveniles aged 7-18 have become the most crime prone group in America. Among the variables most often cited as causes of juvenile delinquency are failure in school, low socioeconomic background, low IQ, poor family environment, and peer influence (Greene & Yawkey, 1982).

Meltzer, Roditi, and Fenton (1986) have stated that academic difficulties have been emphasized as possible precursors of delinquency. Grande (1988) concurs that school failure is frequently associated with deviant behavior and that students prone to unsuccessful school experiences may become enmeshed in a failure cycle leading to delinquency.

Learning disabilities have been a major cause of unsuccessful school experiences among juvenile delinquents. Keilitz and Dunivant (1986) point out that learning disabilities produce academic failure which results in delinquent behavior. They further explain that children with learning disabilities possess certain cognitive and personality characteristics that make them more susceptible to opportunities for engaging in delinquent activities.

A large proportion of the juvenile offender population is handicapped by learning disabilities and thus cannot function effectively in school (Rutherford, Nelson, & Wolford, 1986; Keilitz & Dunivant, 1986; Cole, Chan, & Lytton, 1989). As high as 50-75% of juveniles referred to courts have specific learning disabilities or are functionally illiterate (Finn, Scott, & Zarichny, 1988).

School failure has been linked with poor basic skills. Kosmoski, Gay, and Vockell (1990) confirm that poor and racial minority students do not always receive the same quality of instruction or access to knowledge as do middle-class white students. Dreeben (1987) concurs that schools have been criticized for providing a particularly inadequate education for black students.

The consequence of poor school achievement is often a negative self-image, which may contribute to the development of juvenile delinquency (Meltzer, et al., 1986). Students who perform poorly in school generally have poor self-concepts. Delinquents do not only record very low academic achievements, they also score poorly on self concept measures (Cole, et. al., 1989). Grande (1988) summarizes that the literature supports the relationship between academic failure and juvenile delinquency, and that there is a correlation between disruptive or delinquent behavior and academic achievement.

Ferdman (1990) states that children become literate in the cultural image represented by their school. As schools tend to reflect the dominant culture, pupils from the dominant ethnic group are more likely than are ethnic minority students to find consistency between the various constructs of literacy. Continuing the argument that cultural identity affects literacy, Gordon and Thomas (1990) state that African American students demonstrate adequate ability to develop concepts sufficiently when speaking, but they have difficulties doing the same in writing. Gee (1989) concludes that lower socio-economic black children use

English to make sense of their experience differently than do middle class children.

Just as lower socio-economic status yields greater delinquent activity (Grande, 1988), many of these students, without self-esteem or confidence in their own abilities, end up committing crimes, getting arrested, and spending time in a correctional facility or jail (Pacetta, 1990).

In correctional education programs, environments are restrictive. For incarcerated youth, placement is a security issue, not an educational one (Leone, Price, & Vitolo, 1986). For incarcerated handicapped youths, little, if any, appropriate educational services are provided in juvenile correctional facilities (Rutherford, et al., 1986). To further complicate the issue, the learning styles of delinquents are qualitatively different from those of normal achievers (Meltzer et al., 1986). Thus, the educational needs of these individuals, not met in the community, are still not being met within the correctional system.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal was that the basic literacy skills of the juveniles at the county jail would be improved. The expectation was that a number of students would receive their GED, and have the ability to function in society.

Behavioral Objectives

The following goals and objectives were projected for this practicum.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTED	STANDARD OF ACHIEVEMENT	ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS
Higher pre-GED test scores	8 of 16 will pass test	GED pre-test
Improved oral reading skills	10 of 16 will read orally with expression	Teacher observation
Improved writing skills	8 of 16 will score at least 4	GED Essay Scoring Guide
Improved reading comprehension	10 of 16 will answer inferential questions	Reading passage with questions
Positive attitude toward continuing education	6 of 16 will consider further education	Attitude survey

The behavioral objectives listed above appeared to be measurable and observable and indicated what the situation would look like following the implementation of the solution.

The objectives were based on the indicators of low basic literacy skills listed in Table 1 in Chapter 2. Higher pre-GED test scores would be attained by 8 of 16 students, an increase of 5 students. Improved oral reading skills would be attained by 10 of 16 students,

an increase of 3. In writing skills, 8 of 16 students, an increase of 3, would be able to write well holistically. The holistic approach takes into consideration the point that the writer is trying to make, as well as the style and presentation of the author. It does not penalize the writer for grammatical errors or spelling mistakes. The GED Writing Skills Test Part II grades students on a holistic basis.

Improved reading comprehension skills would be attained by 8 of 16 students, an increase of 3. Reading comprehension would be improved by 2 students, as 10 of 16 would be able to answer inferential questions. The final behavioral objective, a positive attitude toward continuing education would be attained by 6 of 16 students, an increase of 4.

Measurement of Objectives

The GED pre-test is an indication of how a student will perform on the actual General Education Development test itself. There are four different GED pre-tests (AA, BB, CC, and DD) which are approximately half the length of the actual test. The five individual tests on the GED are the Writing Skills Part I and Part II, Social Studies, Science, Literature and the Arts, and Mathematics.

GED pre-test scores are indicators of a student's ability to read, write, and perform mathematical functions. The social studies, science, and literature tests are not tests of previous knowledge, but rather tests of comprehension, recall, and inference. Part I of the Writing Skills test is a test of grammar and spelling. In Part II of the test, students must write a 200 word essay on a given topic. Students are rated on a six point scale as to their ability to write clearly, express their opinion, and stay on topic.

The GED pre-test was selected as a measurement tool because of the breadth and scope of the test, and because the scores indicate the skill levels of the student. Students were given the AA test upon entering class if their reading and math scores indicated above an eight grade level. After working through the practicum process, students were to be given the BB test. Higher scores on the BB test would serve as an indicator of improved skills.

Improved oral reading skills were to be measured by teacher observation. Fluidity of the reading, expression, word recognition and pronunciation were to be evaluated as part of this observation (see Appendix B for oral reading skills evaluation tool).

Writing skills were to be measured by student papers. The teacher would analyze the papers on a holistic basis. The student was to be rated on the clarity of the expression and would be able to rewrite the work, making grammatical and spelling corrections.

Reading comprehension was to be measured by having students read a passage and then answering questions about that passage. The questions tested comprehension and inferential skills. Students would exhibit their improved skills by being able to answer the inferential as well as the comprehension questions.

An attitude survey administered by the teacher was to determine whether the students displayed a positive attitude toward continuing their education after jail (see Appendix C).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Restated, the problem at the county jail was the poor basic literacy skills of the juveniles. The literature contained a number of approaches to the problem and ensuing solutions. It is not surprising that survival in modern societies requires both verbal skills and critical literacy skills (Gordon & Thomas, 1990).

Alderman (1990) stated that teachers who are successful in reaching low-achieving students combine the confidence in their own ability to reach students with high, realistic expectations. It is essential for teachers to recognize the diversity inherent in literacy and its development (Dyson, 1990).

Drawing upon the real life experiences of the students, according to Gordon & Thomas (1990), enables them to engage in struggles in their own interests. In order to accomplish this, they profess that critical

literacy must be taught to open the minds of learners. Gee (1989) concurs that literacy practices are almost always fully integrated with and interwoven into the very texture of wider practices that involve talk, interaction, values, and beliefs.

Paulo Freire's work with illiterate adults demonstrates that educators have to work with experiences that students, adults, and other learners bring to schools and other educational sites. These experiences form the object of discussion. This act legitimates these experiences, giving the student a sense of affirmation and providing the conditions for an active voice in learning to be displayed (Freire, 1985).

The pedagogical approach taken by Freire is echoed by a number of others. Roth (1984) uses what he calls the Language Experience approach, similar to Freire's in that the spoken language of the learner is the basis for the vocabulary taught and the material read. Pacetta (1990) has used materials for remediation directly from the students. Situated in a correctional setting, inmates' own stories are used for vocabulary building, spelling tests, and reading aloud.

Ashton-Warner (1963) holds that creative teaching begins with the approach that everything must come from within the child, and the child's own experiences. The role of the teacher, then, is to set the creative pattern into which these forces will naturally flow. According to Ferdman (1990), in order for the goal of literacy acquisition to be achieved, the connections between literacy and culture must be fully acknowledged and better understood.

Literacy, then, must have a cultural basis. Learners call upon their own capacity to name, read, write, and interpret. These names represent what is really important to the learners and forms the building blocks of a vocabulary. It is similar to what Freire calls "generative words" and Ashton-Warner calls "key vocabulary" (Berthoff, 1990).

Gee (1989) theorizes that literacy is mastered through acquisition, not learning. This requires exposure to models in natural, meaningful, and functional settings. The need for individualized approaches to meet basic needs is documented. Jacobs (1990) states that although blacks share unique cultural experiences, there are distinct individual differences in their learning approaches which must be

met. In a similar vein, Rutherford, Nelson, & Wolford (1985) conclude that implementation of meaningful correctional special educational programs requires procedures for conducting functional assessments of the skills and learning needs of handicapped offenders.

Adolescents with behavior problems and learning disabilities can successfully participate in a peer tutoring program benefiting by a significant increase in academic performance and positive changes in self-concept (Franca, Kerr, Reitz, & Lambert, 1990). Laubach (1960) used this method in his work with illiterate peoples worldwide. When a student had learned one lesson, he taught it to someone else. The advantages are that the lesson is well learned, a new self-respect is gained, education is done by geometrical progression, and the spirit of sharing is fostered (Laubach, 1960).

Dreeben (1987) states that providing a great deal of instructional time and using high-quality, challenging materials are critical to student success in reading. McClain-Ruelle & Telfer (1990) concur that quality literature is crucial to an important goal of reading, that is, reading for understanding.

Keilitz & Dunivant (1986) write that a change in school attitude among students leads to a reduction in delinquency. To maximize youth's successful experiences in school, Dunham & Alpert (1987) state that the juvenile justice system must work with the school system to orchestrate that change.

Description of Solution Selected

The solution chosen by the writer to the problem of poor basic literacy skills of the juveniles at the county jail was to use the students' relevant experiences. Integrating the solutions tested by Freire (1985), Ashton-Warner (1963), Roth (1984), Pacetta (1990), and Gordon & Thomas (1990), this writer utilized an approach that is built upon the experiences of the learners themselves.

The spoken language of the learner was the basis for vocabulary and reading material. These materials came directly from the students' own experiences. This process offered the student an opportunity to actively participate in the improvement of basic literacy skills.

The writer believed that using the students' own experiences as a basis for literacy development would be successful for the following reasons: students will

have had direct involvement in the development of curriculum, materials will have been relevant to the lives of the students, students will have had ownership of the process, learned skills will have been used to teach other students, and finally, self-esteem would be raised as a sense of accomplishment is fostered.

This solution related directly to the behavioral objectives stated in Chapter III. Oral reading skills will have improved because students would be reading their own compositions to others. Similarly, writing skills would be developed as the students refine their initial compositions. Comprehension and inferential skills would be improved by active students in the reading and writing process.

As a result of increased student participation and activity, basic skills would improve. The result would be an increased capability to score well on the pre-GED test. Another result of the success experienced by the student would be increased self-esteem and a positive attitude toward continuing education after jail.

Report of Action Taken

The first step in the implementation of the practicum was to have the students talk about some common experiences they shared at the jail. As the

individuals in the class spoke, a vocabulary list of common terms was generated. The writer wrote the words on the chalk board and the students copied them. The initial list of 30 words was expanded as students talked and wrote their stories. The entire vocabulary list can be found in Appendix D.

The next step in the process was the telling of individual stories. The writer told his story first. The students, somewhat reluctantly at first, volunteered to discuss personal experiences about growing up, school, the neighborhoods where they lived, and how they got into trouble with the law. As the process proceeded, the students felt more at ease in talking about themselves, and sharing their experiences.

The third step in the implementation process was the pencil and paper writing of the stories they related orally. The first drafts were turned in to the writer for corrections and returned to the students for revisions. A second draft was written and reviewed by the writer and sometimes, if the author wished, by other students for suggestions and recommendations.

In the next step of the process, students typed their stories on one of the three Apple computers in

the classroom. Each student was given his own computer disc to store and retrieve his information. Learning the word processing functions of the computer was not difficult, but learning to manipulate the keyboard was frustratingly slow for some. Students helped other students learn the word processing program (Magic Slate II) and assisted in the typing.

The computer was a phenomenal motivating factor in the writing process. For the most part, students were extremely eager to do their work on the computer. On more than one instance, a fight almost erupted over who would get to use the computer first. The students wrote, edited, and revised their work, and printed their own copies. Students wrote personal stories, poems, letters, and assignments on the computer.

The last stage of the process was to have been an oral presentation of the finished product. The students were reluctant, however, to do this and were given the option of sharing the writing with other students privately. The entire process of talking, writing, revising, and sharing was estimated to take between three and four weeks. The process took six weeks to complete, however. Students then started the process again.

Deviations

As implementation of the practicum was about to begin a number of unexpected and uncontrolable events occurred. The first event was a major change in the class roster. Five of the 16 students who had been attending class were either released or sent to state prison in the two weeks preceding implementation. These students were academically among the highest achievers and accounted for the higher GED pre-test scores. Replacing these five students were lower level students who had been in the juvenile detention center. The challenge presented by these students in improving basic literacy skills was clearly evident.

On day one of implementation, a fight broke out in a pod in the juvenile wing, and class was cancelled as all juveniles were locked down. Class would be cancelled three more times thereafter for reasons related to security. A total of 12 class days were missed during the implementation period due to staff meetings, in service days, holidays, and sick days.

Student attendance was a problem during the implementation period. If a student did not wish to attend class on a given day he could not be forced to do so. The mandatory criminal justice functions

involving incarcerated youth such as attorney visits, hearings, and trial dates limited students' class attendance. Also, students were much affected by the disposition of their cases at any given time, and would opt not to come to class when distressed.

By far the most serious deviation encountered during implementation was the extreme rate of student turnover. The writer anticipated some turnover to occur, as the function of the county jail for juveniles is as a temporary holding facility, but did not anticipate the rate that occurred. Only two of the 16 students that were in class when implementation began were still in class 12 weeks later when implementation concluded. During that 12 week time period, 47 students attended class for an average of two and a half weeks. At least ten students were restricted from class for behavioral problems in the pods. Several students were released; three students were sent back to the detention center, and the remainder were sent to state facilities.

Although the turnover disrupted the original implementation plan, the positive consequence was that all 47 students were able to participate, to a greater or lesser degree, in the process of improving basic

literacy skills. Many students, caught up in the excitement of the process, were able to write their stories, type them on the computer, and share them with others.

Another unexpected positive development was the use of student tutors in class. Three students who had recently passed the GED were asked to return to class as tutors to work one-on-one with the lower level students. This was a great success for the lower level students and for the tutors. Several severely learning disabled students were able to write short stories of their own. The tutors themselves wrote a letter to the director of the jail thanking him for the opportunity to further their education in jail (see Appendix E). All three tutors planned to further their education after their release.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The goal of the practicum was that the basic literacy skills of the juveniles at the county jail would be improved. The expectation was that a number of students would pass the GED, and have the ability to function in society.

The following five objectives were projected:

1. Higher GED pre-test scores. 8 of 16 will pass the test.

2. Improved oral reading skills. 10 of 16 will read orally with expression.

3. Improved writing skills. 8 of 16 will score at least 4 points out of a possible six points on essay.

4. Improved reading comprehension. 10 of 16 will answer inferential questions.

5. Positive attitude toward continuing education after jail. 6 of 16 will consider further education.

The first objective was higher GED pre-test scores. During the period of implementation, ten

students took the GED. Of this number, six passed the test, one failed, and results are pending on the other three students (see Appendix F for test scores).

Table 2

GED Test Score Breakdown

10 students took test

Passed the test.....6

Failed the test.....1

Results pending.....3

Because of the turnover mentioned in chapter four, only three students have GED pre-test scores from the beginning and the end of the implementation period. Two of the three students improved (see Appendix G for scores). Eight other students took the GED pre-test during the implementation process. Of the eight scores, five were passing and three failing (see Appendix H for scores).

The second objective was improved oral reading skills. Because of the students' reluctance to read their work aloud, oral reading skills could not be measured using the original instrument. Instead, a rap song that students requested was brought in by the

writer. Students wrote out the lyrics, typed them on the computer, and distributed them among the students to read from as the song played. In this way, students listened, read, and recited, with the same expression and enthusiasm displayed on the tape.

Improved writing skills was the third objective. The original assessment instrument was to be the GED essay scoring guide as applied to students' writing. This was modified during the implementation. As 22 of the 47 students who participated during the 12 week period took the GED pre-test, the essay written for the Writing Skills, Part II Test was assessed. Students were graded on a six point scale, and revised their writing until a score of 4 was achieved.

The real measure of improved writing skills, however, is the actual writings of the students themselves. Students worked collaboratively and independently to write, revise, type, and print their work. This work includes poetry (7), personal stories (15), letters to the judge (5), and GED essays (2). These works are contained in Appendix I.

Table 3

Student Writing

Poems.....7

Personal stories...15

Letters to judge....5

GED essays.....2

The fourth objective was improved reading comprehension. Again, because of the turnover problem described in chapter 4, the original assessment instrument was not used. Proof of improved reading comprehension can be seen in the GED pre-test and actual GED test scores.

The fifth objective, a positive attitude toward education after jail was expressed by all six students who passed the GED test. The enthusiasm exhibited by the other students during implementation may kindle interest in continuing education after jail.

Discussion

The writer believes that despite the deviations and unexpected problems encountered during the implementation process, that the practicum was successful for a number of reasons. First, students

drew upon their own real life experiences, which, according to Gordon & Thomas (1990), enabled them to engage in a struggle in their own interest. The students used their own stories for vocabulary building, spelling, and remediation in a correctional environment as had Pacetta (1990). As in the pedagogical approach taken by Freire (1985), the spoken language of the learner was the basis for the vocabulary taught and the material read.

Perhaps the greatest outcome of the practicum is the students' writings. Not only did a great deal of effort go into the work, but, in some cases, a great deal of emotion. It has been the writer's experience that the primary emotion exhibited by the student inmates on a regular basis is anger. In this case, however, students were able to express on paper some deep feelings about themselves and others that would not have otherwise been expressed.

The student writings represent the creative flow that is the merging of the literacy acquisition process, and culture. The writings represent what is really important to the learner and show that the students should and can be responsible for their own learning.

The third reason for the success of the practicum is the success of six students receiving their high school diploma through the GED test. The level of the pre-test scores offers hope to those students who aspire to receive a diploma. Students realize that with concentrated effort they can achieve in jail what they have been unable to achieve in school.

Fourthly, student attitudes toward education have been improved through the use of the computer. This technological tool sparked new interest in students used to paper and pencil learning.

Lastly, the use of student tutors in the process enhanced the learning of both the tutors and the tutees. This caused positive peer interaction and a shared learning experience between very high achievers, and functionally illiterate students.

The problem of low basic literacy skills of the juveniles at the county jail was countered using solutions tested by Freire (1985), Ashton-Warner (1963), Roth (1984), Pacetta (1990), and Gordon & Thomas (1990). The teacher was the facilitator of a process which allowed the students to develop their own learning and take responsibility for their own education.

Recommendations

Recommendations that could benefit others in a similar setting are;

1. Be flexible. There are many factors outside of the teacher's control in a confined environment that can interfere with a set plan.

2. Allow for the creativity of the students. Students can exhibit astonishing creative abilities when given the opportunity.

3. Allow students to shape their own learning. In this way each student becomes responsible for his own curriculum and his own learning as it relates to his real life experiences.

4. Use technology. The use of the computer can enhance the students' learning experiences.

5. Encourage peer tutoring. Tutoring benefited all involved; low level students, high achievers, and the teacher. It provided a vehicle for student interaction and shared learning.

Plans for furthering the "solution" in the work setting include continued implementation at the jail in the fall as has been the case in the summer, and

implementation in classes at the juvenile detention center.

Dissemination

Plans for disseminating the practicum results include colleagues at the detention center and the jail, the supervisors and director of Dropout Prevention, and Delinquent Youth Education Project in Tallahassee, Florida.

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APPENDIX A

GED PRE-TEST SCORES

GED Practice Test Scores for Juveniles at the County Jail

The scores listed below reflect the scores on the individual pre-tests for each area. The tests are listed as follows:

(A) Writing Skills,
(B) Social Studies,
(C) Interpreting Literature & the Arts,
(D) Science,
(E) Mathematics

Student	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
1	56	41	55	48	53	253
2	50	44	48	53	47	242
3	48	43	49	46	51	237
4	41	38	44	45	48	216
5	42	44	42	48	40	216
6	38	40	44	38	44	204
7	42	41	48	39	40	210
8	38	28	37	40	38	181
9	44	39	40	38	39	200
10	37	33	39	40	42	191
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						

Students 11 - 16 cannot yet attempt the pre-test due to low reading levels.

APPENDIX B

ORAL READING SKILLS EVALUATION TOOL

THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

"AT THIS POINT, I OFTEN WONDER WHETHER OR NOT EDUCATION IS FULFILLING ITS PURPOSE. A GREAT MAJORITY OF THE SO-CALLED EDUCATION PEOPLE DO NOT THINK LOGICALLY AND SCIENTIFICALLY. EVEN THE PRESS, THE CLASSROOM, THE PLATFORM, AND THE PULPIT IN MANY INSTANCES DO NOT GIVE US OBJECTIVE AND UNBIASED TRUTHS. TO SAVE MAN FROM THE MORASS OF PROPAGANDA, IN MY OPINION, IS ONE OF THE CHIEF AIMS OF EDUCATION. EDUCATION MUST ENABLE ONE TO SIFT AND WEIGH EVIDENCE, TO DISCERN THE TRUTH FROM THE FALSE, THE REAL FROM THE UNREAL, AND THE FACTS FROM FICTION.

THE FUNCTION OF EDUCATION, THEREFORE, IS TO TEACH ONE TO THINK INTENSIVELY AND TO THINK CRITICALLY. BUT EDUCATION WHICH STOPS WITH EFFICIENCY MAY PROVE THE GREATEST MENACE TO SOCIETY. THE MOST DANGEROUS CRIMINAL MAY BE THE MAN GIFTED WITH REASON, BUT WITH NO MORALS.

THE LATE EUGENE TALMADGE, IN MY OPINION, POSSESSED ONE OF THE BETTER MINDS OF GEORGIA, OR EVEN AMERICAN. MOREOVER, HE WORE THE PHI BETA KAPPA KEY. BY ALL MEASURING RODS, MR. TALMADGE COULD THINK CRITICALLY AND INTENSIVELY, YET HE CONTENDS THAT I AM AN INFERIOR BEING...

WE MUST REMEMBER THAT INTELLIGENCE IS NOT ENOUGH. INTELLIGENCE PLUS CHARACTER - THIS IS THE GOAL OF TRUE EDUCATION. THE COMPLETE EDUCATION GIVES ONE NOT ONLY POWER OF CONCENTRATION, BUT WORTHY OBJECTIVES UPON WHICH TO CONCENTRATE. THE BROAD EDUCATION WILL, THEREFORE, TRANSMIT TO ONE NOT ONLY THE ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE OF THE RACE BUT ALSO THE ACCUMULATED EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL LIVING."

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
WRITTEN IN 1948 FOR ARTICLE
IN COLLEGE NEWSPAPER, "THE
MAROON TIGER."

APPENDIX C

ATTITUDE SURVEY

ATTITUDE SURVEY - JUVENILE CLASS - COUNTY JAIL

1.) Do you think attending class was beneficial to you? If yes, why? If no, why not.

2.) What did you gain from attending class?

3.) How do you feel about further education after your experience in class in the county jail? Do you plan to continue your education? If so, in what area?

4.) Do you wish to make any additional comments about your experience in class? If so, write them below.

APPENDIX D

VOCABULARY LIST

VOCABULARY LIST

1. television
2. cards
3. fight
4. smoke
5. weight
6. basketball
7. recreation
8. shower
9. school
10. classroom
11. computer
12. read
13. eat
14. chat
15. sleep
16. telephone
17. visitation
18. sick call
19. nurse
20. court
21. ejaculation
22. masturbate
23. course
24. haircut
25. commissary

26. horseplay
27. brush teeth
28. write letter
29. receive
30. church
31. hospital
32. alternative
33. battery
34. robbery
35. kidnapping
36. moped
37. stealing
38. judicial
39. judge
40. detention
41. charge
42. crime
43. ghetto
44. projects
45. trouble
46. weapons
47. committee
48. attempt
49. wound
50. gunshot
51. scared
52. release

53. lesson
54. jail
55. possession
56. graduate
57. habitual
58. records
59. encourage
60. accuse
61. adolescent
62. alleged
63. record
64. attorney
65. exceed
66. drugs
67. crack
68. weed
69. marijuana
70. heroin
71. crystal
72. friendship
73. homeboy
74. caught
75. month
76. sentence
77. sheriff
78. client
79. security

80. intelligent
81. intelligence
82. busted
83. department
84. corrections
85. mandatory
86. minimum
87. maximum
88. finger print
89. aggravated
90. aggression
91. aggressive
92. assertive
93. suffering
94. insanity
95. insane
96. dynamite
97. grenade
98. allowance
99. rehabilitate
100. straight
101. criminal

APPENDIX E

LETTER TO DIRECTOR

APRIL 24. 1991

DEAR DIRECTOR FELTON:

WE FEEL IT IS APPROPRIATE TO THANK YOU FOR TAKING SUCH TIME AND EFFORT TO HAVE THIS PROGRAM AVAILABLE FOR JUVENILE INMATES. GIVING SOMEONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE THEIR KNOWLEDGE IS APPRECIATED BY ALL OF US. IT WAS ALSO AN HONOR TO MEET YOU PERSONALLY AT OUR GRADUATION CEREMONY. EVEN THOUGH WE ARE INCARCERATED. WE KNOW THAT THIS EXPERIENCE HAS BENEFITED US AS TO EXPANDING OUR MINDS. HELPING US TO REALIZE THAT ANYONE CAN ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS IF YOU HAVE SOME WILL POWER TO DO SO.

AS A GROUP WE TRY TO ENCOURAGE OUR FELLOW INMATES THAT AN EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT IN OUR SOCIETY. WE ARE WILLING TO BE INVOLVED IN ANY FUTHER DEVELOPMENTS THAT YOU MAY HAVE IN MIND. ALSO. WE ARE CURRENTLY HELPING OTHER JUVENILES PREPARE FOR THE UPCOMING G.E.D. TEST. WE FEEL THAT SINCE WE BENEFITED FROM THIS PROGRAM THEY CAN ALSO. ONCE AGAIN WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

APPENDIX F

GED TEST SCORES

GED Test Scores for Juveniles at the County Jail

The numbers listed below are the actual test scores achieved by the students who took the test during implementation. Ten students took the test, six passed, one failed, results are pending on three. The tests are listed as follows:

(A) Writing Skills,
(B) Social Studies
(C) Interpreting Literature and the Arts,
(D) Science,
(E) Mathematics

Student	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
1	49	58	58	53	56	274
2	52	52	49	47	47	247
3	53	52	49	43	51	248
4	48	59	58	48	61	274
5	51	52	51	47	48	249
6	57	59	59	52	58	285
7	40	37	45	37	42	201

APPENDIX G

COMPARATIVE PRE-TEST SCORES

GED Pre and Post Test Scores

Three students were tested at the start of implementation, and then again at the conclusion of the 12 week period. The scores below indicate that student 1 improved slightly overall, student 2 showed great improvement, and student 3 declined slightly. The tests are listed as follows;

(A) Writing Skills, (B) Social Studies, (C) Interpreting Literature and the Arts, (D) Science, (E) Mathematics

Student		A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
1	Pre-test	47	42	45	44	53	231
	Post test	42	47	48	50	49	236
2	Pre-test	40	43	41	38	39	201
	Post test	57	52	57	53	44	263
3	Pre-test	45	41	39	43	45	213
	Post test	44	45	37	43	36	205

APPENDIX H

PRE GED SCORES

GED Pre-test Scores

The following scores on the GED pre-test were scored by eight students during the implementation period. Students were not in class long enough to be post tested, or to take the GED. Five were passing scores, three failing. The tests are listed as follows;

(A) Writing Skills, (B) Social Studies, (C) Interpreting Literature and the Arts, (D) Science, (E) Mathematics

Student	A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL
1	55	59	64	77	48	303
2	47	53	51	77	63	291
3	59	55	62	55	55	286
4	59	56	52	48	53	268
5	51	52	53	58	52	266
6	41	42	41	40	41	205
7	38	42	46	44	33	203
8	41	24	39	36	33	173

APPENDIX I

STUDENT WRITINGS

"" CHARLES ""

IN THE PAST I'VE BEEN THROUGH THINGS, BUT NEVER LIKE THIS BEFORE,
I'VE LOST FRIENDS, RELATIVES, GIRLFRIENDS, AND MAYBE EVEN MORE.
THIS PAIN I'M SUFFERING, SEEMS LIKE CAN'T GO AWAY,
AND THE GUILT I'M FEELING, SEEMS LIKE IT'S GOING TO STAY.
IT IS A FEELING, THAT I CANT BARE TO STAND,
ALTHOUGH I FEEL LONELY, THEN AGAIN I FEEL I CAN.
IT STARTED OUT, AS SOMETHING LIKE AN DREAM,
PEOPLE SAID I TRIED TO, BUT REALLY I DIDN'T MEAN.
TO TAKE MY PARTNER'S LIFE, AT THE WINK OF AN EYE,
RUNNING DOWN THE STREET I PRAYED, "PLEASE GOD, DON'T LET HIM DIE!"
WHEN I FOUND OUT HE WAS DEAD, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO,
I THOUGHT, "WHAT ELSE TO LIVE FOR, MY WHOLE LIFE IS THROUGH."
AS I KNELT DOWN AND CRIED, PEOPLE RUBBED ME ON MY BACK.
I ASKED EVERYONE I SAW, "PLEASE BRING CHARLES BACK."
I WOULD LIKE TO THINK TO THANK ALL OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO STOOD THERE BESIDE ME,
WHO KEPT MY MIND FROM GOING INTO INSANITY.

THE END ....

THIS HOW IT GOS

I STAY IN SOUTH CLEARWATER, WHERE ALL THE BOYS CHILL.
WE GOT FRESH M.C CADILLACS.
I KNOW A NEW WAY TO GET ALL THE HOES.
YOU GO GET YOU A SET OF 30 IN VOGUE.
IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE MONEY DON'T FEEL ASHAMED, IF I WERE YOU
I'LL GO GET IN THE DOPE GAME.
DON'T THINK I'M PLAYING BECAUSE I'M NOT.
SO LET ME TELL YOU A WAY TO GET STARTED OFF.
YOU GO TO THE MAN AND BUY A HALF A PACK.
SPEND 250 AND MAKE 500 BACK.
THEN YOU GO IN BY A WHOLE PACK.
SPEND 500 AND MAKE 1000 BACK.
AND YOU KEEP ON SELLING UNTIL YOU HEAVY AS HELL,
THE LAST THING ON YOUR MIND IS GOING TO JAIL.
SO YOU HEAVY AS HELL.
YOU RIDING IN A BENZ AND EVERY BOY WANT TO BE YOUR FRIEND.
YOU GOT A WHITE ROLLS ROYCE AND A LIMOSINE.
YOU PACKING A 357 AND A M-16.
YOU'RE EATING OUT EVER NIGHT, YOU SLEEP AT MOTELS GETTING
CALLS ON YOUR BEEPER QUARTER KEY SELL. HA, HA, HA, HA.
THEN THE BOYS END UP IN JAIL WITHOUT A BAIL,
LIKE ME.

THE END

DRUGS, CRIME,and FRIENDSHIP

DRUGS IN THE CITY WILL NEVER PASS AWAY,

SITTING ON THE CORNER SELLING DRUGS DAY BY DAY.

IN THE DOPE GAME YOU HAVE TO WATCH YOUR BACK,
CAUSE YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU ARE GOING TO GET JACK.
WHEN YOU ARE IN THE DOPE GAME SALE BY YOURSELF AND
KEEP IT COOL.

SMOKE A LI'L PINE, SNIFF SOME COCAINE AND ACT A
FOOL.

HERE COME THE POLICE MAN COMING TOWARD YOU.

NOTHING BUT RUN ON YOUR MIND PRAYING THAT YOU
DON'T GET CAUGHT FOR THE CRIME.

YOU SEE YOUR HOMEBOYZ WITH A POCKET FULL OF
MONEY AND A NECK FULL OF GOLD
RING ON EACH FINGER A CAR WITH TRUES AND VOGUES.

YOU THINK IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND I WANT TO BE
JUST LIKE THAT.

SO YOU HANG AROUND FOR A WHILE AN START SELLING A
DRUG CALL CRACK!!

MONTHS AND MONTHS PASS AND YOU ARE GETTING STRONG,
CAUSE YOU GOT IT LIKE THAT.

AFTER A WHILE YOU GET CAUGHT AND YOU END UP WHERE
I'M AT. DRUGS, CRIME, AND FRIENDSHIP !!!!!!!!!

the end

POETRY FROM DOWN UNDER II May 22,1991

There is always a reason,
For the things you don't want one for.
But there is no reason for love,
When it knocks you on the floor.

I am sure you have found someone,
Who you thought was right.
But all they wanted from you was one night.

Why is there love when its really not there?
When the evidence other people see,
Is your messed up hair.

You leave the house in a tidy French braid.
But when you do return,
It's obvious you've been laid.
Won't they ever learn?

This is the ninetys dear,
That's all you can say.
But in reality the reason is,
It's your life not his.

Since the day you went on your first date,
You signed that pact not to be late.
'Cause of brother's protective custody,
No guy has ever met the real Jody.

What is the reason for this?
You feel damned at any right,
Confront your cage and breech the light.
This is your life,
Not his!

POETRY FROM DOWN UNDER May 20,1991

It takes a person with a very big heart,
To realize how much a person can give.
To see how much you can take,
All you have to do is live.

It takes a person with a very big heart,
To realize how much a person needs.
In order to find the right person,
Look for the one who never leaves.

I'm forever wondering when that girl will come.
But when she does,
All she'll find here is love.

All the way up till now,
Many girls have come my way.
But still to this day,
I have not found the one worthy of my vows.

THIS IS LOVE

THEY SAY THAT LOVE IS BLIND
CAUSE IT IS NEVER SEEN
I DON'T REALLY KNOW
BUT LET ME TELL YOU
WHAT I THINK IT MEAN
LOVE IS LIKE A LIVING PERSON
BECAUSE LOVE IS REAL
IT IS ALSO SOMETHING
THE WHOLE WORLD CAN FEEL
LOVE CAN BE HAPPY
THEN AGAIN IT CAN BE UPSET
WHEN WE ALL SAY THINGS
THAT WE WILL SOMETIMES REGRET
LOVE IS LIKE A SONG
WITH A SWEET MELODY
YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PERSON
AS IF YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT KEY
LOVE IS ALSO BEAUTIFUL
BUT NOT EVERYONE HAS IT ALL
IT IS NEVER ENDING
LIKE ONE OF NATURE'S WATERFALLS
LOVE HAS A MEANING
THAT NOT EVERYONE UNDERSTAND
IT'S IN THE HEARTS OF FEMALES
THAT'S WHY THEY SAY THAT
EVERY WOMAN NEEDS A MAN
THERE IS NO PRICE FOR LOVE
CAUSE IT IS GIVEN FREE
THAT'S WHY TODAY, I'M SO HAPPY
YOU CHOSE TO GIVE YOURS TO ME!

'GOOD BYE'

T'WAS THE YEARS HAVE PASSED
SINCE YOU WENT AWAY
BUT THEN AGAIN IT SEEMS
THAT YOU HAD JUST LEFT YESTERDAY
I TRY NOT TO THINK OF
THIS TERRIBLE TRAGEDY
EVEN THOUGH MY HEART SAYS
WHAT WAS IT ABOUT LOVE
THAT WE HAD TO CHANGE?
IT FEELS MY HEART'S BEEN SHOT
AT A VERY CLOSE RANGE
WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID
OR WHAT I DIDN'T DO
THAT MADE THIS BIG WIDE SPACE
BETWEEN ME AND YOU
I OFTEN SIT AND WISH
ALL WINTER, SUMMER, AND SPRING
WITH FINGERS CROSSED AND HOPING
THAT ONLY YOU IT WILL BRING
I'VE NEVER TRIED TO HURT YOU
CAUSE TO ME IT DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT
AS I GAZE AT THE STARS
THAT TWINKLES IN THE NIGHT
I REALLY WANT YOU TO GIVE ME
JUST ONE MORE TRY
BUT EVEN IF YOU DON'T
I STILL WOULDN'T GET OVER
THE WAY YOU SAID GOOD-BYE

When I First Started Getting in Trouble

This essay is going to explain my lifestyle, and how I first started getting into trouble with the law. I am going to start at a young age and then work my way to the top.

When I was about ten or eleven it was the first time I had ever experienced getting in trouble. I was in the Winn-Dixie store and I wanted some gum but didn't have any money. So I looked around to see if anyone was looking. I figured no one was looking so I then placed the gum in my pocket. I begin walking toward the door and as I was just getting out the store, a man grabbed me and took me to the back of the store. From there he called the police. When the police arrived I was placed in the back seat of the car, and was taken to the police department. After sitting at the police department for several hours my dad then arrived. He signed a few papers and I was on my way home. When we arrived at my house, he told me to go upstairs. I didn't think anything was going to happen but he was right behind me. Before I even got in my room he was on my butt like white on rice.

When I was about twelve or thirteen was when I really started getting outrageous. I started running the streets all the time, and getting in trouble in school. I also started hanging with the wrong people at the wrong time.

At the age of fourteen and fifteen is when I started getting involved with drugs. I sold a drug that called crack. I sold it all day after school, and sometimes I

At the age of problem really got bad. I was smoking pot and drinking beer. I use to smoke pot almost all the time. It seemed like I was losing my mind, but being in jail has slowed me down some and I think I will be a different person.

THE END...

My story starts likes this:

A couple of years ago I used to see a lot of things, things like crack, guns, dynamite, grenades, weed, etc. I first wanted to get into all those things but people I knew told me I don't need all that kind of stuff. My friends and I wanted to get into it so bad that when my brother would go out somewhere we would search his room for something. We knew where his hiding places were after a while. When he would leave, I would look his mattress and take some money.

"I never took none of the drugs" with the money I stole. Me and my friends would go to the mall the next day and spend it all. That went on a while until he started finding out. When he found out he kept on telling me he was going to break my neck if he caught me. So I stopped that and cooled down for awhile.

At the time my mom was giving us an allowance, but I kept thinking "what's $20 dollars a week when I can make $500 a day." So I started saving my allowance until I got $100.

I took the money to one of my brother's friends and asked him to sell me some dimes. He didnt want to at first, but he did. Thats when all my troubles started.

I started coming in the house late at night, and my mom stopped giving me allowance because I was doing bad in school and wasn't doing my homework. The teachers kept calling my house telling my mom I couldn't stay awake in class. At that

time my brother started knowing what I was doing because he always saw me in the alley. He told me I needed to stop, but I told him "nobody gives me money so why should I."

He didnt know what to say then so he treated me like I was one of the older boys he had hanged with. I liked the feeling to be treated like I was older. "I was only 14 ." I started buying guns and everything they had.

Two years later, I was doing the same old thing. At this time I had a car, and two of my friends and I shared an apartment. We payed 140.00 a week. The reason we payed so much was that our landlord knew we were selling dope out of the apartment. It seemed that everything was going good for me. After all, I bought everything I had. After a while, I started going down. I ended up selling my car.

Things still weren't going right so I moved back with my mom and stopped selling dope. I went to school everyday and started doing my homework. After a while, I missed not having a house on my own. That lead me into selling drugs again. "I couldn't stand not having any money in my pockets." My friends and I seemed like we couldn't make the money we used to. So I started skipping school to make more money. That's when this accident Im charged with happend.

THE END.

MY STORY

Well as you know I'm a criminal. It started in 1988. I did my first crime when I was 13. I tried to break into a school; me, my uncle, and my little brother. We broke the window but didn't get in, because we got scared and ran.

My uncle and my little brother ran and slid down the pole. I was so scared, jumped straight off the roof, and landed on my head, but I still got up and ran.

I ran by the front of this church, trying to cross the street to go to my aunt's house. But one of my other aunts rode by. She's the one that told the other police officer where we were. Then we went down to the police station, got finger printed, and then they called my mom. Mom came, and picked us up. And that was the end of that crime...

Then I thought I would never go back to the police station. It took me along time before I started back getting in trouble. One night, I was down the street, and I heard some noice coming out of a bedroom window. I was about 13 at the time, and you know how you get that feeling that someone else is having sex, because when you where small you used to like making sex, or see some else making sex. I thought that they where making sex, so I went up to the window to see, but I couldn't see anything. But I was so determined to see. I went home and got a knife, came back then started cutting the screan on the window. I cut the

screen and put my hand though, then I moved back the 77
curtians. They where in the living room talking, all the lights where on in the house. I looked down seen a brand new pair of Converse, they looked like they could fit me, so I reached in the window to get them. Then I saw the car keys by the purse. I went though the window. The people didn't even hear me. So I went and got the keys, purse, and don't think I forgot the shoes. I looked in the purse and found $31.00.

I went to the car put the key in the door then opened it. I got in the car, but I really didn't know how to drive yet. When I started up the car a man came running outside saying, "get the hell out of my car". I was so scared that I tried to jump out the car and run, but the door wouldn't open. I kept pushing on the door and it came open. I jumped out the car and pointed my finger at them saying, "I'll shoot you if you don't get back in the house."

Thats all I really want to say about myself. Sorry I did end the story, but I like leaving people in suspence.

THE END

THE CRIMES I'VE DONE

It takes place in Fowlsome, Georgia, a little town outside Bainbridge, Georgia. The crime that is told in this story is a burglary. The co-characters are Tyrone, my 16 year old cousin, Ahmad, my 13 year old brother, and Alonzo, my friend's brother. The main characters are Mario and Eddie, my 16 year old friends, and the narrator of this story, Deon.

One Sunday night, about 7:30 p.m., my friends, my cousin, and me were walking up the road. It was a long and dark road, but we didn't care. All we wanted to do was use the phone at the town's post office. As we approached this small white building Tyrone was saying, "I need to call my sister down in Miami." As he dialed the number a few seconds went past and no one picked up the phone. Ahmad said, "Let's use the phone at the store." We started another little journey up the road to the store.

That night wasn't like any other night. It was a peaceful calm night. You didn't feel any wind blowing. As we walked onto the store grounds, Mario said, "After this we're going to my house." We all agreed. As Tyrone got on the phone he dialed the number again. Finally the person who Tyrone was calling was home.

Eddie started playing around. Picking up rocks and throwing them at each other was the game. All of a sudden one of the rocks that was thrown hit the store window. Tyrone then got off the phone telling the person who he was talking

to that he would call them back. Tyrone came over to examine the crack in the window and said, "Ya'll better stop throwing those rocks." So we stopped.

We walked to Mario's house and started talking. We then crossed the street to the old run down game room. We sat there for a little while and talked some more. Eddie said, "Since we have done cracked the window, we might as well finish it." So Mario and I started thinking, but Tyrone and Ahmad didn't know whether they should do it. After all that went through our minds, we started walking to Mario's house. To get to Mario's house we had to go behind the store.

As we walked back on the store grounds, Eddie picked up a big piece of brick off the ground. He threw it up in the air so when it hit the window it would be sort of an accident. The rock hit the window and put a big, round, jagged edge hole in it. So we ran through the cut towards Mario's house. Ahmad and Tyrone kept on walking to Mario's house while Eddie, Mario, and I stayed behind

We then came to a problem. It was who was going to go in first. Since the whole was too small for either Mario or Eddie, and I was the smallest of the crew, I went first. I ran in and came out with a bag full of groceries. Then it was Eddie's turn. He threw another piece of rock in the window to make the hole bigger. He then went in and came out with the same thing. It was the same way with Mario.

That's the whole story. THE END.

THESE NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT.

ALL ABOUT JAIL AND YOUR SURROUNDINGS!!!

IT STARTED A LONG TIME AGO. IT WAS THE YEAR 1988, IN JANURARY, IN TARPON SPRINGS. BLACK, SKI, GIGALLO, RED AND BIG MONEY - THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT SELL LARGE QUANTITYS OF DRUGS IN THE AREA THAT WE LIVE. THEY STARTED WITH NOTHING. WITHIN TWO MONTHS THEY HAD EVERY THING THEY NEEDED.

AS THE YEAR ENDED THEY ALL STARTED HAVING TROUBLE WITH DIFFERENT THINGS. BLACK WAS HAVING TROUBLE IN SCHOOL AND AFTER A FEW MONTHS, HE QUIT. LATER HIS CAR WAS STOLEN AT THE COUNTY FAIR. ALL OF HIS FRIENDS AND HE HAD TO FIND A RIDE HOME.

ONE YEAR LATER HE WAS CAUGHT FOR TWO COUNTS OF SALES AND POSSESSION. HE WAS IN JAIL FOR A MONTH AND A HALF AND GOT OUT ON EIGHTEEN MONTHS PROBATION. NOW HE'S DOING THE SAME THING.

SKI WAS IN SCHOOL, ALSO DOING FAIRLY WELL, UNTILL HE LET MONEY GO TO HIS HEAD. HE QUIT SCHOOL IN THE ELEVENTH GRADE. HE HAD IT ALL; GIRLS, MONEY, FAME, AND CARS.

WITHIN A YEAR AND A HALF HE HAD NOTHING BUT A LOT OF BABIES, A BRONCO, AND A NAME. HE ALSO GOT BUSTED SELLING DRUGS AND IS NOW DOING A THREE AND A HALF YEAR MINIMUM MANDATORY IN INDIAN RIVER DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

GIGALLO CAME FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY. HE DIDN'T HAVE TO SELL DRUGS. HE DID IT FOR THE FUN OF IT. FOUR MONTHS LATER HE GOT A DRUG CHARGE, BUT HE WAS STILL DOING WELL IN SCHOOL. TWO

WEEKS BEFORE HIS PRE-TRAIL DATE, A FRIEND FOUND HIM DEAD IN HIS MOTHER'S CAR HANGING OVER THE STEARING WHEEL. THE POLICE FRINGER PRINTED THE CAR. NO FRINGER PRINTS WERE FOUND. TO THIS DAY WE DO NOT KNOW WHO DID IT.

RED WAS HIGH ROLLING. HE STARTED IN THE BEGINING OF 1988. IN 1989 HE GOT BUSTED FOR SELLING DRUGS. HE'S STILL SELLING DRUGS TODAY. HE HAD A 1987 CONVERTABLE BMW AND A 1989 BRONCO. ALL THAT GOT TAKEN FROM HIM BY THE POLICE. AND HE HAD ALL OF THIS AT THE AGE OF NINETEEN. IN THE END OF '89 HE GOT A TWO AND A HALF YEAR SENTENCE IN PRISON. HE DID GOOD AND GOT OUT IN THREE AND A HALF MONTHS. THE END!!!!!!!!!!!!!

This Essay is about myself and how I followed in my brother's footsteps. I'm 17 yrs. old. My friends call me Turkey Ham. I don't know why but they do. Well I was 15 when I started getting into trouble, listening to my brother tell me how he, my cousins, and some friends were robbing stores and other places.

I got my cousin and friends, the same friends my brother was with, and their little brother Tyrone. We got my car and went to the same place my brother Eli went with his friends. We had fun because we always got away with robbing people, stores, restaurants, and breaking into peoples homes, apartments, and cars.

I never was the one to get caught until my brother, Tyrone, and I decieded to rob some men who were unloding a truck of hospital laundry. Tyrone and I were standing in the road while my brother Eli went up to the six men and laid them all down and took their money. He took about $900 from them.

Instead of running away, he walked away as if nothing happened. He came out and told me and Tyrone that he had robbed the men, but I didn't believe him. Tyrone and my brother took off running but I because I didn't believe him I walked.

About a minute later some men in a work truck tried to run me over. Meanwhile Eli and Tyrone were standing on the railroad tracks waiting for me. I ran to the basketball courts, handed Tyrone my jacket and beeper, and waited for

the men to come. Eli and Tyrone ran home. I didn't know that Tyrone had droped my beeper. The truck pulled up and the men jumped out and started walking up to me, calling me all kind of names. I told him I was going to burn his ass if he didn't get back with the crowbar. He said he was going to kick my BLACK ASS all over the place and started to run toward me.

I fired one shot. It hit the truck. I fired a second and it hit him in the corner of his chest. He fell flat on his face. I starting running home not knowing Tyrone had droped my beeper. Later on when I asked Tyrone for my beeper he said he must have dropped it while he was running. But it was too late. The police had already got it.

The next week the police came to pick me up on robbery and attemped murder charges, but I wasn't home. I was on the run for three months. They finally caught me one day at the basketball courts. I went to J.D.C. for one month and then they sent me to the County Jail for six months until my trial.

The guy I shot had not come to court or they couldn't get in touch, so the judge gave me time served, six months house arrest, and one year probation. I went back to my cell in Echo 1, then they called me to go home.

I have been getting into trouble and hanging with the wrong crowds since then. I really think my brother is the reason that I get into so much trouble, because he didn't lead me into good things.

ME AND WHEN I STARTED SELLING DRUGS

I AM 17 YEARS OLD, 6 FEET 9 INCHES TALL, AND AM IN 11TH GRADE AT GIBBS HIGH SCHOOL. I PLAY BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL. I LIKE TO STAY OF TROUBLE BUT I HANG AROUND SOME FRIENDS WHO SELL DROP.

ONE DAY I WAS OVER THERE AND SOME WHITE MAN CAME AND WANTED SOME DROP AND MY FRIEND HAD SOME SO HE TOLD ME TO GIVE IT TO HIM. THE WHITE MAN WAS DRINKING SO I SAID OK AND I WENT TO THE MAN AND GAVE HIM THE DROP. THE SHERIFF'S PEOPLE JUMPED OUT OF THE BACK OF THE TRUCK. THEY ASKED ME IF THERE WAS ANYBODY IN THE ALLEY AND I SAID NO. THE SHERIFF MAN RAN IN THE ALLEY BUT THEY DIDN'T SEE ANYBODY SO THEY TOOK ME AROUND THE BLOCK AND LET ME OUT OF THE BACK OF TRUCK. THEY PUT ME IN A POLICE CAR AND TOOK ME TO THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT.

THEY LET ME GO HOME THAT NIGHT AND THEN TWO MONTHS LATER THEY SENT ME A COURT PAPER TO MY MOM'S OLD HOUSE. MY MOM MOVED TO A NEW HOUSE SO THE POST OFFICE SENT US A PAPER TO THE NEW HOUSE. MY MOM DIDN'T KNOW WHERE I WAS, SO THEY PUT A PICK UP ORDER ON ME AND I TURNED MYSELF IN TO THE SHERIFF. I WENT TO COURT TWO WEEKS LATER.

THE JUDGE GAVE ME TWO YEARS ON HOUSE ARREST AND TWO YEARS PROBATION. I TOOK IT AND I'M GOING TO GET A JOB AND STAY OUT OF TROUBLE.

WELL, THAT'S ALL ABOUT MY LIFE STORY SELLING DRUGS.

Well it all began when I started hangin' out. I started hangging out with drug dealers, and started getting into trouble and selling drugs. I was in an out of jail about four times. Then I realized that it was too late, that dope wasn't the answer. When I first went to jail, I thought it wasn't nothing. Finally they caught up with me and have me now. I know now this is the time to think about what I did wrong.

When I started playing football, I was the number one running back. I played for Cross Bayou Bucs, and at that time football was everything to me. I use to get MVP, trophies, and patches. When I was young I use to go watch my uncle play football. My uncle played for Largo High School. One day the St. Pete Times came out there and took my picture when I was watching my uncle practice. That was the good old days.

When I was getting kicked out of school, at first it wasn't nothing. At that time I had the big head and didn't listen to any one. I was like they can't tell me nothing because I was selling drugs. I did no homework or school work. Then I started realizing that I was doing wrong. And soon as I started doing good on the outs they picked me up. Now I'm just sitting and waiting to get out. THE END.

How I Live My Life

Hi, how are you doing? Fine I hope. Well I'm going to tell you a little story about my life as a youngster.

5-9 years of age.

I was a sweet little child. I always went to school and did what I was supposed to do. I had a lot of potential, I always cared for my peers, and everyone loved me cause I gave them respect.

10-12 years of age.

I was a little "rambunctious" and very hyper at times. Then I got with the wrong crowd and started stealing things. I used to get inro street fights. Then I got with "guns." That was my worst mistake cause that's all I live by.

13-14 years of age.

My life was all over with. I had got into the "Dope Gang." I started shooting people for no reason. I got up with smoking weed and drinking real heavy and turning on people who cared for me.

January 26, 1991.

Now I'm sitting in the county jail with my face in my hands crying like a child but supposed to be a man. I never learned about reality until they closed the door and threw away the key. Now I'm sitting back relaxing doing my time for my "hideous" crimes. I made a mistake, and I'm not regreting, cause I had to pull the trigger and start stepping.

That was my life then. Now I'm trying to straighten up my life. That's why I'm here.

This is how it first started. We started stealing bikes because that used to be the thing back in 1986. Everyone used to ride good looking bikes. You know I had to get one. So we had started fixing bikes and sometimes we would see bikes better than the ones we had. We would wait for them to put it down and then we would jump on it.

About two years later we'd see people riding mopeds around everywhere. One day all the boys got together at night. We went down by the pier looking for them on the side of houses. We had a pair of wire cutters to pop the chain. If we didn't see any, we would go on the north side of St. Pete.

In the 90s we had gotten into cars because we used to see people younger than us riding in cars coming around the projects. All the fellows would be standing on a corner in the projects. The boys would come through there speeding in around the corner.

One day we couldn't take it anymore so we went and started trying stealing cars and broughaming around the neighborhoods and the projects pulling hos, cause they were out for the cars. We would pull them to the side ("yo, what's up"). They would get in the car and we would go to the mot.

We started getting caught by the police and coming to JDC. One day I was with some boys who stole a car and the police caught us. I went to JDC and then came to the county jail.

That's how it all started.

Well, my story starts in 1974, on April 16, my date of birth. I was born in St. Peteburg, Florida, at Bayfront Hospital. I was good back then until I moved to Miami. That's when my problems began. I was fighting all of the time because I liked St. Pete, and didn't like Miami. A few years later I moved back to St. Pete with my mom and two brothers. I'm the second oldest.

When we moved back I was good until I stared fighting in school. I got kicked out of one elementry school and two middle schools. After that, I got sent to St. Pete Alternative, a bad school. Nothing changed because I got arrested my first time for battery. I did 72 days in J.D.C. and I got sent to a halfway house for three months. I did good and got out.

Twenty-seven days later I was back in jail for armed robbery. I got out and got a job. A couple mounths later I was locked back up for attempted armed robbery. I got out off that, got my job back, then got locked up again for a lot of charges including armed robbery, strong armrobbery and kidnapping. Then they brought me to the county jail.

I got out again and still had my job, but I got locked up again for mopehead theft. I got out and got locked up this time but when I get out I'm not getting in any more trouble. I will just take care my baby and get a job and I should be all right.

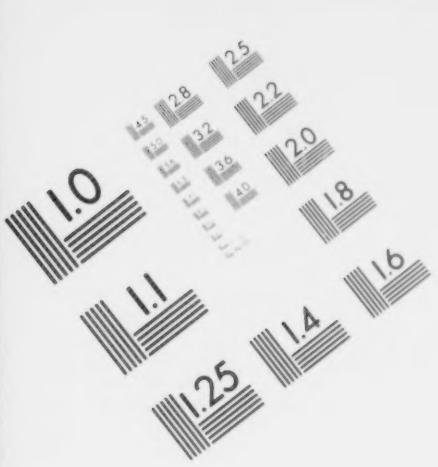
I'm going to talk about how crime is on the street from my point of veiw. I'm going to start on the way I think people do robberies. I think they do it because of drugs, cars, gold, and thing's like that. They would go rob a store or some like that to go by drugs to sell. And the money that they make off the drugs would go to buy gold and cars. Some go broke and they rob over and over. Some go to jail. some don't. But the ones that are still selling drugs have made a lot of money. If they go to jail they may have the money to bond out. I can tell just like every person in this room that they know people that sell drugs and have tried to sell it. Some accomplish, some don't. And the ones that don't accomplish anything stop, but by the time they have stopped, they have a record as long as this paper.

The Bad Days of My Life

I'm going to tell you all about the bad days of my life. I started getting in trouble from the age of ten on. It all started one day when my friends came up to me. They said let's go get in some trouble, and I agreed.

At the age of 11 my mom past and I just got worse. I got a gun and started shooting and fighting. At the age of 13, I started selling drugs and sleeping at motels and had a lot of money when I went out of town. Well, by the time I was 14 I went up the road. I got out and screwed up again.

So now I'm in here doing the time. But when I get out I'm going to try and better myself. Being in here I've had time to set my mind on the right track. Being out there on the streets ain't even about it.



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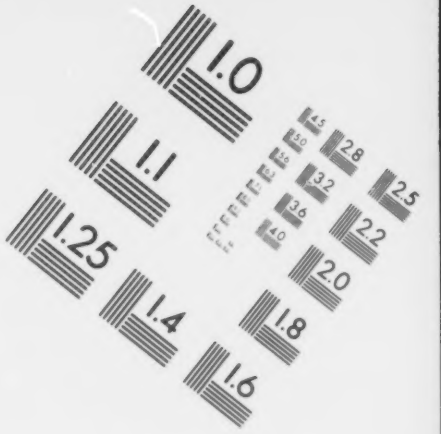

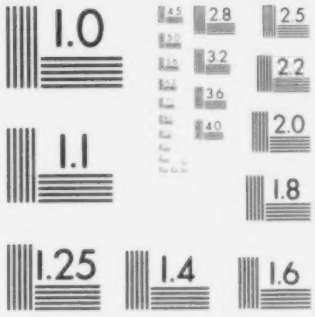

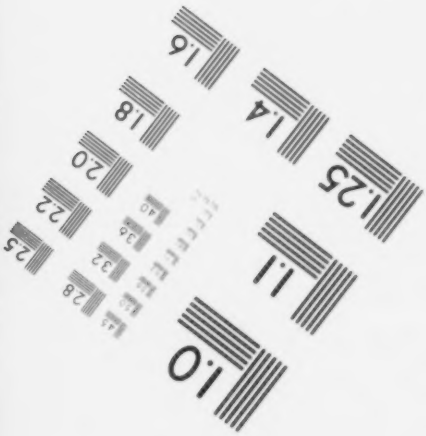

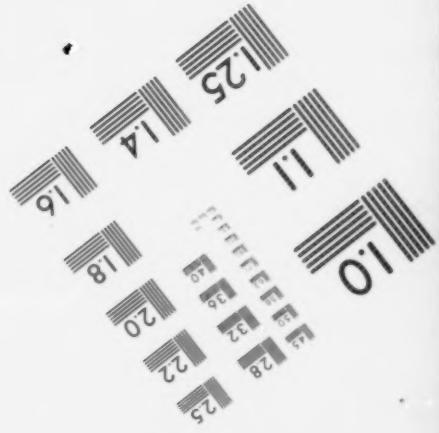

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This is a story about how I got my first car.

I was looking for work when I found a good job at Safety Harbor Spa. It was easy work. All I had to do was dice tomatoes and carrots. When I was done I had to pour guest's drinks. When I got my first pay check it was two hundred dollars. I took the money and bought some dimes of crack.

Don't get me wrong, I wasn't smoking. I doubled my money and bought a car with no tag. I got pulled over by police and went to jail I stayed in there for four days. I got out on time served. When I stepped out it was one hundred dollars to get the the car out so I said the hell with it.

I was going to get a new one two weeks later but I got arrested for a drug charge. I did twenty one days in J.D.C.

The End

In this essay I will tell about the first time I got ARRESTED. The POLICE caught me STEALING. I was really SCARED. I thought I was going to JAIL. I was lucky that night. They took me to JDC that morning. I went to court and got released. But in the END I didn't learn my lesson.

DEAR JUDGE,

I KNOW THAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT MY CHARGES AND YOU'RE THINKING THAT I LIKE TROUBLE. THAT'S NOT TRUE. MY FRIST CHARGE EVER WAS AN AGG BATTERY. I WAS IN JDC FOR 47 DAYS AND THEN THEY SENT ME HERE. SIR, I DIDN'T EVEN GET A CHANCE TO PROVE THAT HE SHOT AT ME FRIST. I KNOW THAT I HAD NO BUSINESS WITH A GUN, AND TO YOU IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE I WAS LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. THAT IS NOT TRUE. I JUST HAD A FEELING THAT HE WAS COMING BACK TO TRY AND SHOOT ME. AND THAT'S WHAT HE DID.

SIR, I THINK TO MYSELF ALL THE TIME THAT IF I DIDN'T HAVE THAT GUN I WOULDN'T BE HERE TO TELL YOU ALL THESE THINGS. AND THIS OTHER BATTERY CHARGE I WAS NOT ARRESTED FOR, I WASN'T IN JDC FOR THAT, I WAS IN THERE FOR NOT COMING TO COURT. IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK. I CAME TO COURT FOR IT ONE TIME. THEN WE MOVED TO A NEW ADDRESS.

THIS COURT KNEW THAT WE MOVED, BUT SOMEHOW JDC DIDN'T KNOW. I WAS IN JDC FOR 31 DAYS FOR THAT AND THEN THEY SENT ME OVER HERE. I WASN'T EVEN PROVEN GUILTY FOR THIS CHARGE, SIR. ALL I AM TRYING TO SAY IS I AM NOT TROUBLE AT ALL.

I GO TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY UNLESS I HAVE TO COME TO COURT. SIR, ALL I WANT IS A CHANCE TO BE SOMEBODY. I AM ALSO ON THE FOOTBALL TEAM AT MY SCHOOL. IF I AM IN JAIL I WILL NEVER GET TO BE ANYBODY BUT A BUM. THAT'S NOT WHAT I PLAN. I AM ONLY 15 YEARS OLD. ALL I AM ASKING FOR IS A CHANCE, SOMETHING THAT I NEVER GOT. IT LOOKS AS IF YOUR ARE ONLY ONE THAT CAN MAKE THAT CHANGE. THANK YOU FOR READING MY LETTER.

SINCERLY,

Dear Judge Cadell,

Hi my name is . And I have a big problem with my case. Every time I go to court I get postphoned. Now I've been here close to a year, and haven't been inside a court yet. I know I did a very bad crime,but I don't see why, I have to sit so long. Every sence I've been getting in to trouble, I haven't been to a program to see if I could be REHABILATED. But I'm planning on straighting up my life. I wonder if you could give me another chance. I know I don't need one, but at I least desive a second chance. I know the PROSCUTER want me to go to prison, but as young as I am, I don't think I could handle it, but the choice is really up to you. I'm not saying this because I want to go home, because everyone wants to go home. But being treated as a adult really isn't the life I was exspecting. Well at least I took the time to write you, and tell you how, I really feel.

Well that's really all I wanted to say on my behalf,so I'll see you in court.....

YOURS TRULY.

The reason I'm copping a C.O.P. isn't because I did the aledged crime, it's because I don't want to sit in here waiting until my trial date. In a way I think I can beat the charge and I don't want to waste the court's money trying to find me guilty or not, because the victim himself is a HABITUAL CRIMINAL. The only witness the state has is a suspect who was part of the crime, and he himself is also a HABITUAL CRIMINAL, and to bring to the court's attention, the state witness has just completed and came home from a training school "MARRIANNA," for a ARRMED ROBBERY, 2(ct) KIDNAP. How does the court know he's not just saying this to keep himself from going back up the road or maybe prison. Judge, two to three years in a program is a little too long for a second time offender. I know judge that you are giving, "DEON," my client a chance, but my cliet isn't a person to just go out and do a crime. Majority of the people who come in front of you have long records as if they don't care about getting in trouble. You see my client don't have a record like any other juvenile, so that does tell you something about him. Another reason I don't think my client should be in a program that long is his SCHOOL RECORDS. He don't get in trouble in school, well beside one time, but that's not bad. To be in the 9th grade he's taking above level classes. If you understand the environment he's coming from, you would

think he's the type of person who will drop out of school or you would think he would have a longer record than this. If you, the judge, send to a three year program he would have to graduate in a program school. The majority of the black population doesn't finish school, they just drop out. We have in front of us your honor a person with an idea to go and be something in life. Ask him why we should send some one away for making a big mistake that can ruin his life. On his files in the county facility he has not recieved a D.R. for any reason. To check back in his records, the last person he has committed a crime with was older than him, and the crime that was committed this time if it was heard right, were committed by adults, ages exceeding from 16 to 22. The state attorney doesn't know what they're talking about, they'll say anything to get paid. How can you say he's the master mind of the eledged crimes if the people who the crimes that were done was committed with people older than him. If anything he's probably being encourage by older people. If you have a bad tire or flat tire you change it, now you have in front of you a bad person why don't you train him and make him better that's all your honor.

DEAR JUDGE,

I KNOW YOU ARE LOOKING AT MY CHARGES, AND I KNOW YOU THINK I'M A PROBLEM CHILD. I DON'T LIKE TROUBLE. I'M JUST IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME. NOW, I LEARNED MY LESSON. FROM NOW ON, WHEN I SEE TROUBLE I'M GOING TO WALK AWAY FROM IT. I'M IN HERE ON A POSSESSION OF COCAINE CHARGE. I KNOW YOU ARE WONDERING WHAT I'M DOING WITH COCAINE. I DIDN'T HAVE ANY COCAINE, BUT THE POLICE SAID THAT THEY SAW ME THROW IT ON THE GROUND. I HAVE A PREVIOUS COCAINE CHARGE ON MY RECORD. I DON'T DEAL WITH ANY DRUGS. THEY ARRESTED ME AND SENT ME TO JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER FOR TWENTY-EIGHT DAYS AND THEY DIRECT FILED ME TO THE COUNTY JAIL. I PICKED UP THESE TWO DRUGS CHARGES HANGING AROUND WITH THE WRONG GROUP. I KNOW NOT TO HANG WITH THAT SAME GROUP FROM NOW ON. ALL I ASK FOR IS A CHANCE TO TURN MY LIFE AROUND. I WILL DO MUCH BETTER. I'M STILL IN SCHOOL AT GIBBS HIGH SCHOOL. I'M PLAYING FOOTBALL FOR THE SCHOOL. I WOULD LIKE THE CHANCE TO RETURN TO GIBBS HIGH SCHOOL. I WANT TO TRY TO BE SOMEBODY WHEN I GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

SINCERELY,

YOUR HONOR,

MY CLIENT IS BEING CHARGED WITH A CRIME HE ADMITS HE'S DONE. MY CLIENT, MR.WHITFIELD KNOWS THE WRONG THAT HE HAS DONE AND REALLY WANTS TO CHANGE HIS LIFE.

YOUR HONOR, MY CLIENT IS 16 YEARS OF AGE AND HAS NEVER BEEN TO A RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM. THE STATE HAS NEVER TRIED TO CHANGE MY CLIENT'S FEELING TOWARDS LIFE IN ANY WAY.YOUR HONOR, HOW DOES THE STATE ATTORNEY EXPECT MY CLIENT TO CHANGE HIS LIFE WHEN THE ONLY PROGRAM HE HAS EVER ATTENDED IS A HOME PROGRAM CALLED "S.I.G." YOUR HONOR, THIS A GOOD PROGRAM, BUT NOT A GOOD ENOUGH PROGRAM TO CHANGE MY CLIENT'S FEELINGS TOWARDS A BETTER LIFE.

YOUR HONOR, MY CLIENT DOESN'T HAVE A LONG PRIOR RECORD, BUT HE DOES HAVE A FEW ON HIS NAME. MY CLIENT IS A GOOD YOUNG MAN. HE APPARENTLY WAS HANGING AROUND THE WRONG GROUP OF PEOPLE AND WAS MISLEAD INTO A LIFE OF CRIME.

YOUR HONOR, MY CLIENT IS STILL OF A YOUNG AGE AND KNOWS HE CAN CHANGE HIS LIFE AROUND WITH HELP. I THINK MY CLIENT WILL BE ABLE CHANGE HIS LIFE AROUND WITH THE HELP OF COUNSELING IN A HIGH SECURITY JUVENILE PROGRAM. YOUR HONOR, I KNOW THIS WILL TAKE TIME, BUT TIME IS NOT THE ISSUE. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A YOUNG MAN, A YOUNG MAN WHO STILL HAS A LOT OF LIFE TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

YOUR HONOR, IF IS ABLE TO CHANGE HIS LIFE IN JUVENILE, HE WILL BE ABLE TO GROW UP TO BE AN INTELLIGENT INDIVIDUAL IN THE FUTURE. SENDING CARLOS TO AN ADULT PRISON SO SOON IN LIFE WITHOUT GIVING HIM A REAL CHANCE AT CHANGING

HIS LIFE AROUND WOULD REALLY BE A CRUEL THING TO DO TO THIS YOUNG MAN.

YOUR HONOR, I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT YOU SEND MY CLIENT TO A HIGH SECURITY JUVENILE PROGRAM TO HAVE AT CHANCE TO CHANGE HIS LIFE AROUND. I WOULD LIKE THANK YOU FOR LISTENING TO THE CASE OF THIS YOUNG MAN.

The times we are living in now are the best and worst of all times. There are many new technological "break-throughs" that all man kind can surley benifit from. Yet, there are also many things happening to the people and environment to make things alot worse than they should be.

The environment is declining severly. Acid rain is destroying the Rain Forests, from wich we get a very high percentage of the oxygen nessary for life on Earth - as we know it. Every day the population of homeless people grows. At least one species of animal has become extinct each year since 1900. Scientists are working to solve these problems, but are not succeeding as well as it is needed.

There are also many things we have now which were only thought about by Jules Verne. We have a shuttle that is launched into orbit and returns like a plane. We have weather satellites that orbit the Earth and track natural disasters such as hurricanes. So much damage is being prevented, at the same time so much is being destroyed.

But I feel that if everyone on this planet pulls together to help each other, the world can be a much better place. Just a hand full of people can't be expected to accomplish this feat alone.

Thank you for hearing my point of view.

Some say that we live in the best and worst of times. We have the best transportation system that we have have ever had and the latest technology. We also have pollution and the threat of nuclear war.

Our transportation system is the best it has ever been. Today we have many different kinds of transportation. Automobiles are the most common used today and highways are still being built all the time. Trains have improved in luxury and durability. Airplanes fly people all over the world in the shortest time possible. Subways and buses get people from one part of a city to another very cheaply.

Science is credited for the latest technology that we have and are still coming up with. Computers are very commonly used in running a business today. Computers have improved the last years. They are very small and are still very efficient.

Due to all the technology and transportation there is still a lot of pollution. Acid rain is caused by smoke from huge factories and exhaust from automobiles. Large cities create tons of trash that there isn't enough room to dispose.

The threat of nuclear war is very hard on people. If nuclear war were to break out the earth would be destroyed.